

Cheri Bragg Acker, Registered Voter
February 20, 2014
Letter to the GAE Committee

RE: HB 5124 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORICAL RECORDS AND ACCESS TO RESTRICTED RECORDS IN THE STATE ARCHIVES

Dear Senator Musto, Rep. Jutilla, and distinguished members of the GAE committee:

My name is Cheri Bragg Acker, a registered voter and citizen from Manchester, CT. I am writing to you to discuss my personal concern with raised HB 5124. It is my understanding that this bill would allow people's medical records who were served by State mental health facilities to be made public 50 years after their death.

As the family member of a person who has been served in state mental health facilities, our family would be directly affected for potentially unlimited generations to come. I am opposed for several reasons:

1. This bill discriminates between people who received state services and those that used private resources. Anything that separates state mental health facility service users from anyone else is discriminatory.
2. As conservator of person for my family member with current access to her state medical records, I can tell you that they often present a very narrow "clinical" opinion. The point of view of the person receiving treatment is often completely excluded from these records as is the family's. Furthermore, important statistical information may be missing or inaccurate.
3. If legitimate reasons exist for wanting records for historical purposes, identifying names and birth month and day should be removed from the records beforehand in order to preserve confidentiality and prevent discrimination between mental health service users.

If you have any further questions about how this might affect me or my family members, I would be happy to try to answer them.

Sincerely,

Cheri Bragg Acker